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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-third session

Draft report

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Addendum

Coordination questions: report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

(Item 4 (a))

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2012

1. At its 8th meeting, on 6 June 2013, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2012 (E/2013/60).

2. The Director of CEB introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of it.

Discussion

3. The annual overview report of CEB for 2012 was welcomed, and appreciation was expressed for the Board's important work to promote coherence and coordination among the entities of the United Nations system. In particular, efforts to ensure the responsiveness of United Nations system activities to national priorities were welcomed, and Committee members noted that the report now included an annex providing a summary of the actions taken by CEB in response to conclusions and recommendations from the previous year. In this regard, a number of delegations sought clarification with regard to the contents of the report, in particular the fact that it did not provide sufficient information in response to the Committee's previous conclusions and recommendations. A delegation expressed

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the view that the annexation to the report of a summary of the status of implementation of those conclusions and recommendations was merely a formality. In that context, it highlighted various examples demonstrating deviation from legislative mandates on the part of various Secretariat entities, including CEB. The need to respect the respective and distinct roles of the principal United Nations organs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, was also highlighted by that delegation. In addition, a number of delegations expressed regret that the Secretary-General continued to ignore several of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, as reflected in the report.

4. Serious concern was expressed by one delegation at the lack of compliance on the part of the Secretariat with a number of United Nations resolutions, as reflected during the consideration of various documents by the Committee during its current session. The narrative of programme 11, Environment, demonstrated this situation, in the opinion of the delegation.

5. Delegations recognized and welcomed efforts to foster increased dialogue between Member States and CEB, especially in the area of the harmonization of business practices. Clarification was sought as to whether this was limited to formal meetings, such as those of the Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, or also included informal meetings. The importance of utilizing both modalities was stressed.

6. Some delegations emphasized the importance of ensuring that the activities of CEB were in conformity with intergovernmental mandates, and highlighted activities regarding the inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans and coastal issues (UN-Oceans) and "Delivering as one", which, they noted, were still under consideration by Member States. Delegations also enquired about the mandate to mainstream the rule of law into the work of the United Nations, noting specifically the comment in the report that "the Secretary-General decided to mainstream the rule of law in the work of the United Nations" and that CEB had agreed to support the Secretary-General in that initiative.

7. With respect to activities related to the system-wide preparation for and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, additional information was requested regarding the review by CEB of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the country level. Furthermore, many delegations enquired about the role of CEB in assisting Member States in building the post-2015 development agenda, asked for elaboration regarding the initiative of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to undertake wide-ranging consultations, and stressed the importance of ensuring that the views of Member States were reflected in those consultations. Several delegations also enquired about the extent to which the Bretton Woods institutions were involved in the work of CEB.

8. In the light of the need for a coherent global framework for effective response to the very complex and interconnected challenges to be faced in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, some delegations stressed the importance of ensuring integrated United Nations system-wide support so as to avoid the overlapping and duplication of efforts. In this context, they reaffirmed the key role to be played by CEB in fostering policy coherence, as well as in taking coordinated and effective action to address the wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to that global agenda.

9. Several delegations noted that the annual report made reference to some conferences and summits but not others — including the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul in 2011 — and sought clarification regarding the role of CEB in an upcoming event to be held in follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development.

10. With regard to cooperation among the entities of the United Nations development system, delegations requested further information about the role of CEB in the preparation of General Assembly resolution 67/226, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and raised a question about the extent to which the capacity of country teams had been strengthened as a consequence of the UNDG retreats on United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and whether there had been improvements on the ground as a result of that work. Additional information was requested about the UNDG toolkit on good practices and lessons learned that had been disseminated as part of efforts to strengthen system-wide knowledge management in order to facilitate United Nations system contributions to the Frameworks and other planning frameworks and mechanisms.

11. In relation to the harmonization and simplification of business practices, appreciation was expressed for that CEB initiative. Many delegations took note of the improvements and concrete results achieved and called for the work in this area to continue. A few delegations requested further information about the project relating to treasury services, which had yielded savings as a result of better exchange rates through collaboration, with a view to considering whether it should be recommended that the project be expanded. Other delegations commended work undertaken to increase access to United Nations system procurement for vendors from developing countries, and asked for more details to be provided about the outcome of that initiative. A question was raised as to whether the guidelines for or approach to the harmonization of business practices had been customized for use in countries engaged in or emerging from conflict.

12. In respect of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, an enquiry was made regarding the status of their implementation throughout the United Nations system.

13. Delegations made a number of observations on the subject of strategic planning in the United Nations system. The view was expressed that strategic planning was a substantial component of coordination and that CEB should bring that issue to the attention of its members so that they could identify ways to improve system-wide coordination in that area.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. **The Committee reaffirmed the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and welcomed the periodic review by CEB of their implementation at the country level, as well as the Board's support for Member States. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure the continuation of that support.**

15. **The Committee emphasized the key role to be played by CEB in ensuring coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of and**

follow-up to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, in accordance with relevant intergovernmental mandates. To that end, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to report to the Committee, in the context of its annual overview report to be submitted for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, on ways and means of strengthening that role to foster policy coherence in the United Nations system in order to ensure coordinated and effective action to address the wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to that global agenda.

16. **The Committee reaffirmed the importance of continuing the dialogue between CEB and Member States in order to further improve the Board's transparency and accountability with respect to Member States, and noted the efforts made by CEB in this area, in particular the improvements to the Board's website. It recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure the continuation of those efforts.**

17. **The Committee recognized the work of CEB on the harmonization and simplification of business practices, and welcomed the instances in which opportunities for efficiencies and the reduction of administrative and procedural burdens had been created. In that regard, the Committee requested that it be informed of future progress and recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need to continue to better address that issue.**

18. **The Committee noted that some of its recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly had not been implemented, and therefore reiterated its recommendations to the Assembly to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the following concerns:**

(a) **The need to ensure that the Board's activities and initiatives, including those related to system-wide coherence, which also included "Delivering as one" as defined in section IV.C of resolution 67/226, were in line with intergovernmental mandates;**

(b) **The need to ensure the enhanced alignment of the measures of the High-level Committee on Management with the existing United Nations legislative framework, including in the area of procurement.**

19. **With regard to the annex to the report containing a summary of the status of implementation of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure that in future such summaries would be improved and evidence-based.**

20. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to facilitate opportunities for developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the procurement processes of the United Nations system, in accordance with existing rules and regulations.**